Second Issue

FACTS CONCERNING SEGREGATION AND INTEGRATION

Issued by the Arlington, Virginia, Public Schools for
the information of School Advisory Committees,
Parent-Teacher Associations, and other
interested persons.

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SUPREME COURT ARGUMENTS POSTPONED

The United States Supreme Court on November 22 announced that it will delay further the hearing of arguments as to how the ruling of the court against racial segregation in the public schools shall be put into effect. The death of Associate Justice Robert H. Jackson, which results in "the absence of a full court", is given as the reason for the postponment.

When the original integration decree was issued last May 17, the Supreme Court announced that arguments as to how to implement the ruling would be heard in October. Early in the fall the date was postponed to December 6. Even with the December 6 date for arguments, final decrees were not expected to be issued until spring.

The new announcement that the cases will be continued sets no date for hearing the arguments. The Senate will not act until January on the nomination of Judge John Marshall Harlan to the court. If Judge Harlan's nomination is confirmed in January, the court would then be complete.

ARLINGTON SCHOOL BOARD STATEMENT AT PUBLIC HEARING

An official statement from the Arlington School Board, giving the opinion of the Board as to the action which should be taken in Virginia in light of the Supreme Court decision of last May concerning racial integration in the public schools, was presented by Mrs. Elizabeth Campbell, chairman, at a public hearing in Richmond, November 15, 1954.

The hearing was held by the Virginia Commission on Public Education, appointed by Governor Thomas B. Stanley.

John B. Boatwright, Jr., secretary of the Commission on Public Education, issued the call for the public hearing at which Mrs. Campbell spoke. In his letter of October 7, addressed to all members of the General Assembly of Virginia, to chairmen of all county Boards of Supervisors, and to mayors or other officials in all cities and towns in Virginia, he said,

"The Commission desires to obtain the views and recommendations of the governing bodies and citizens as to what Virginia should do when the decision of the Supreme Court becomes effective . . . . . The hearing will be devoted to the specific question: 'What course should Virginia follow in the light of the decision of the Supreme Court in the school segregation cases?'"

The Arlington County Board received the letter announcing the hearing. The County Board voted to send County Manager A. T. Lundberg to the hearing as an observer. The County Board then referred the invitation to the hearing to the Arlington School Board.

The School Board sought the advice of the Committee to Study Problems of Integration in the Arlington Schools as to what statement the School Board should make at the hearing. The Integration Committee, appointed last June, is made up of 7 negro citizens and 21 white citizens of Arlington. On November 8, the Integration Committee unanimously approved a tentative statement, which was later officially adopted by the Arlington School Board to be presented in Richmond.

The statement from the Arlington School Board is as follows:

"The Arlington County Board of Supervisors referred to the Arlington School Board the invitation to appear before your Commission. As chairman of this School Board and on its behalf, we respectfully submit to you the following recommendation:

"First: We believe that the system of public education in the Commonwealth of Virginia should continue to be maintained and supported and the compulsory school attendance laws of the state should be continued in force.

"Second: During the present interim period, before the final decrees of the Supreme Court directing how the integration decision is to be put into effect, we ask the Commission to urge that calmness and restraint prevail in all acts and statements by citizens, in all official acts and statements, and particularly in any legislative action by the Commonwealth of Virginia concerning the matter of integration of the races in the public schools.

"Third: We urge that local school boards be given maximum latitude as to the methods to be used to carry out the decrees of the Supreme Court within the framework of the law of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

"Fourth: As we have faith in our American form of government and its provisions for due process of law, it is the prayer of this Board that recommendations made by the Governor's Commission after the final decrees of the Supreme Court have been entered, be legally consistent with such decrees."

VIRGINIA FILES BRIEF IN INTEGRATION CASE

Monday, November 15, was the deadline for the filing of briefs in the Supreme Court school integration cases.

Virginia's brief said in part: "Education now follows one pattern in the State; a plan for local variation must be devised. Time is needed for the preparation of such a plan; without such a plan Virginia's schools may be closed."

Seven states and the District of Columbia filed briefs in the case. The Washington Post and Times-Herald summarized the briefs as follows:

"The District brief said no further court action is necessary since school integration will be completed here by next September. Kansas said major steps have been taken toward integration and more are planned next year.

Virginia, South Carolina and Delaware begged for time. Delaware said a significant percentage of people in parts of the state are not ready to accept integration. Virginia said local authorities must work out individual plans. South Carolina said courts cannot command adoption of affirmative solutions."

PTA COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTS

The executive committee of the Arlington County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations on November 3 unanimously passed a resolution asking that Governor Stanley and the Commission on Public Education preserve the public schools of Virginia, maintain the compulsory attendance laws, and permit local autonomy in carrying out the spirit of the Supreme Court decrees.

COUNTY BOARD ASKS STATE UNIFORMITY

The Arlington County Board on November 27 unanimously passed a resolution urging the Virginia Commission on Public Education to take the following stand regarding the Supreme Court integration decree:

1. That the Commission be urged to pursue a course which will continue to preserve state's rights.

2. That any plan finally adopted be uniform throughout the state.

George M. Rowzee, Sr., who introduced the resolution, explained that the purpose of the request for state uniformity is to eliminate confusion on the part of persons who are considering moving to Virginia.

Wesley W. Cooper, in discussing the County Board resolution, mentioned that it expresses a viewpoint different from that of the School Board resolution on the same matter. As reported in The Arlington Sun, Mr. Cooper said he did not oppose Mr. Rowzee's motion but that he "wondered whether a statement should be made at all if it does not represent the people of the county."

Alvin F. Kimel said he agreed with Mr. Cooper that the resolution of the County Board "is not as meaningful until the concensus of the people is determined, but that it is policy of the Board."

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S STAND

United States Attorney General Brownell last week filed a brief for the Department of Justice, giving that department's views on integration. His recommendations, as summarized by The Washington Star, are:

"The Supreme Court should direct inferior Federal courts to supervise integration in their districts.

"Lower courts should order local school officials to submit integration plans within 90 days.

"The courts should hold hearings to determine if the plans submitted will integrate the schools as quickly and smoothly as possible.

"The lower courts should modify the plans if necessary and then order them executed by the earliest practicable date.

"Progress reports should be submitted periodically by the school officials.

"If no plan for integration is drawn by local school officials, the local court should order integration to be accomplished at the beginning of the next school term."

In commenting on the Department of Justice recommendations, the Attorney General said that segregation must be abandoned, "as quickly as feasible, regardless of how much it may be favored by some people in the community."

ARLINGTON LEGISLATORS AT STATE HEARING

All four of Arlington's representatives to the State Assembly had a part in the hearing at Richmond November 15 on the Supreme Court ruling against racial segregation in the public schools.

State Senator Charles R. Fenwick and Delegate J. Maynard Magruder are members of the Governor's Commission on Public Education which held the hearing.

Delegate Harrison Mann submitted to Chairman Gray of the Commission the results of a survey which he took "to obtain a cross-section of opinion of the electorate in Arlington County on the segregation problem." He reported that he sent out just over 1,000 requests for views and suggestions on the problem. In his letter, dated November 11, 1954, he reports:

"To date there have been 134 replies, by mail, telephone, and personal contact, or approximately 13% of those written to. The responses are still coming in at the rate of 10 to 15 a day. These are divided as follows: 63% did not favor integration in any form if it could possibly be avoided; 26% favored integration, either immediately or by positive steps to institute it gradually. In 11% of the responses it was not possible to accurately determine the views of the writer.

"Various suggestions were made. Quite a number of the people remarked that if the races were left alone, the vast majority of each would prefer to go to school with members of their own race. A significant number of those who favored integration suggested that it be started gradually in the first grades and worked out over a period of time. Those who opposed integration made various suggestions centered on a three-school system (for white students, negro students and integrated) and repeal of the compulsory school laws. Only a very small percentage advocated abolishing the public school system."

Delegate Kathryn H. Stone asked for careful study of the problem "in the best tradition of a Christian and liberty-loving people whose basic tenet is respect for the individual person."

"The present position of our school board, which I share", Mrs. Stone said,"is that no step should be contemplated by your Commission which would impair the great progress made in Virginia under the Constitutional guarantee of free public education and the compulsory school attendance law.

Further, that the possibility of integration is one which must be worked out locally, as the facts and public opinion support first steps. The successful conduct of a sound program of public education rests, in the final analysis, upon the community and its duly constituted school board. What may be workable in one community may be impractical in another. We believe that no blanket, State-wide prescription can meet the issue posed.

"As we await the final decrees of the Supreme Court on implementation of its decision, may we strengthen our deep resolution on the importance of good public education to the life of our Constitutional democracy; may we bear in mind the great differences among our communities which will require, I think, local answers to local situations, and may we firmly resolve to make our answers consonant with the decision of our highest tribunal."

DIFFERING VIEWS AT RICHMOND

A detailed report of the hearing in Richmond on November 15 was printed by the Richmond Times-Dispatch. The following excerpts from this account summarize some of the views presented:

> "Set up what amounts to a triple, in place of the present dual, school system by retaining separate schools for whites and Negroes and adding mixed schools for those wishing to attend integrated classes.
>
> "In effect, abolish the public schools and turn education over to private school corporations.
>
> "Repeal or amend the compulsory attendance law and the State Constitution's provision requiring the General Assembly to maintain free public schools.
>
> "Several middle-of-the-road speakers voiced strong opposition to weakening the constitutional requirement, but would revise the attendance law so no child would be forced into mixed classes.
>
> "Pro-integration plans ranged from the do-it-now type to a gradual approach of beginning in the lowest grades and working up over a period of years.
>
> "Ministers and church groups generally offered mild but firm appeals urging the commission to find a way to conform with, rather than try to circumvent, the court's ruling."

THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

President Eisenhower commented on the integration question at a press conference on November 23.

As reported by the newspapers, "The President said he believed the Supreme Court would avoid any arbitrary order on the integration process and weigh practical problems and deep-seated emotions involved. He remarked that the court might try to devise a way to bring about de-segregation under some form of decentralized process."